

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Royal Gorge Field Office
3028 E. Main Street
Canon City, CO 81212**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-2011-0081 EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): COC-075015

PROJECT NAME: Fisherman's Bridge Land Acquisition

PLANNING UNIT: Eco-Subregion 1 - Arkansas River

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: 6PM, T. 15 S, R78 W, Sec. 10, NE1/4NE1/4

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management, Royal Gorge Field Office

ISSUES AND CONCERNS: High pressure and demand from commercial rafters coupled with a constricted facility at the Fisherman's Bridge launch site has created excessive congestion, delays, and user conflicts during the boating season at this popular put-in. BLM is analyzing the acquisition of a small parcel of land with river frontage adjacent to the Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site to create an additional launch site as a possible solution. The parcel being considered for acquisition is currently vacant. There is a concern that if a private residence is built on this parcel of land, future conflicts between the private landowner and the public boat launch/recreation site users may arise, however it is not known what types of conflicts may arise, if any.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

The Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site is the main commercial boat launch for trips through Brown's Canyon of the Arkansas River. The parcel to be acquired lies adjacent to and south of this recreation site. The parcel is located approximately 6 miles south of Buena Vista, CO and 20 miles north of Salida, CO near the town of Nathrop. The parcel is located in Chaffee County, CO. Highway 285 passes very near the property.

Brown's Canyon is the busiest stretch of the river for whitewater boating. Approximately 140,000 commercial guests float through the canyon annually. The Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site operates at near capacity most weekends throughout the boating season (Memorial Day through Labor Day). Acquisition of this parcel of land would allow boating uses to be spread out through the addition of another launch area, thereby reducing conflicts between boaters competing for use of the two existing rail slide boat ramps.

The current Fisherman Bridge Recreation Site launching facilities consists of two rail slides that are very steep and are approximately 100' in length. The slope precludes boaters from using the site as a take-out. The topography of the parcel of land to be acquired is not as steep and may allow for a road to be constructed that leads to the river's edge. The road would allow boaters to use this new site as both a put-in and take-out. Any improvements to the site would require additional NEPA documentation that is not within the scope of this Environmental Assessment.

The majority of the parcel to be acquired is located on a flat bench approximately 40 feet above the Arkansas River. The parcel then gently slopes down to a lower bench adjacent to the river. Vegetation on the upper bench consists of grasses and low shrubs. The lower bench consists of grasses and a few evergreen trees. Some riparian vegetation can be found along the river's edge. (Please refer to the attached map(s) for a description of the property boundaries)

The Arkansas River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) received Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies for the purpose of acquiring land along the Arkansas River. One of the Area Wide Multiple Use Goals identified in the Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan (ARRMP) is to acquire parcels that are needed to accomplish objectives through exchange or direct acquisition. One of the Area Wide objectives identified in the plan is to acquire properties to improve river access for fishing, boating and other types of recreation opportunities. This acquisition will provide an additional 800' of river access. The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), a partnership between BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and is located within the boundaries of the SRMA. Together, AHRA acquires parcels that benefit the public through increased access to the river and for the protection of the natural resources. Appendix D of the current river plan further identifies land acquisition and development needs as of January, 2001 when the revised river plan was signed. This listing may be modified or updated from time to time as required and is not considered to be a final listing of acquisition parcels. Appendix D is to be used for guidance only and represents acquisition opportunities along the river corridor that were available when the plan was being revised in 2001.

The AHRA is one of the leading economic contributors to the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The commercial boating industry and the angling community provide a large part of these economic benefits. The ease of access to the river; coupled with the amount of access available to the public within the 150 mile recreation area, is a large factor in the economic benefits to the region. Any time additional public river access can be provided it is believed to only help maintain this economic situation.

BLMs PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose of the action is to acquire this small parcel of land as a means to alleviate congestion and high traffic conflicts at the SRMA. The need for the action is pursuant to Sec. 205 of Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976. The parcel is located within the Arkansas River Special Recreation Management Area, a Land and Water Conservation Fund project area. {Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964 as amended in 1989 to allow LWCF funding for acquisition of BLM conservation and recreation areas. }



Fishermans Bridge Land Acquisition

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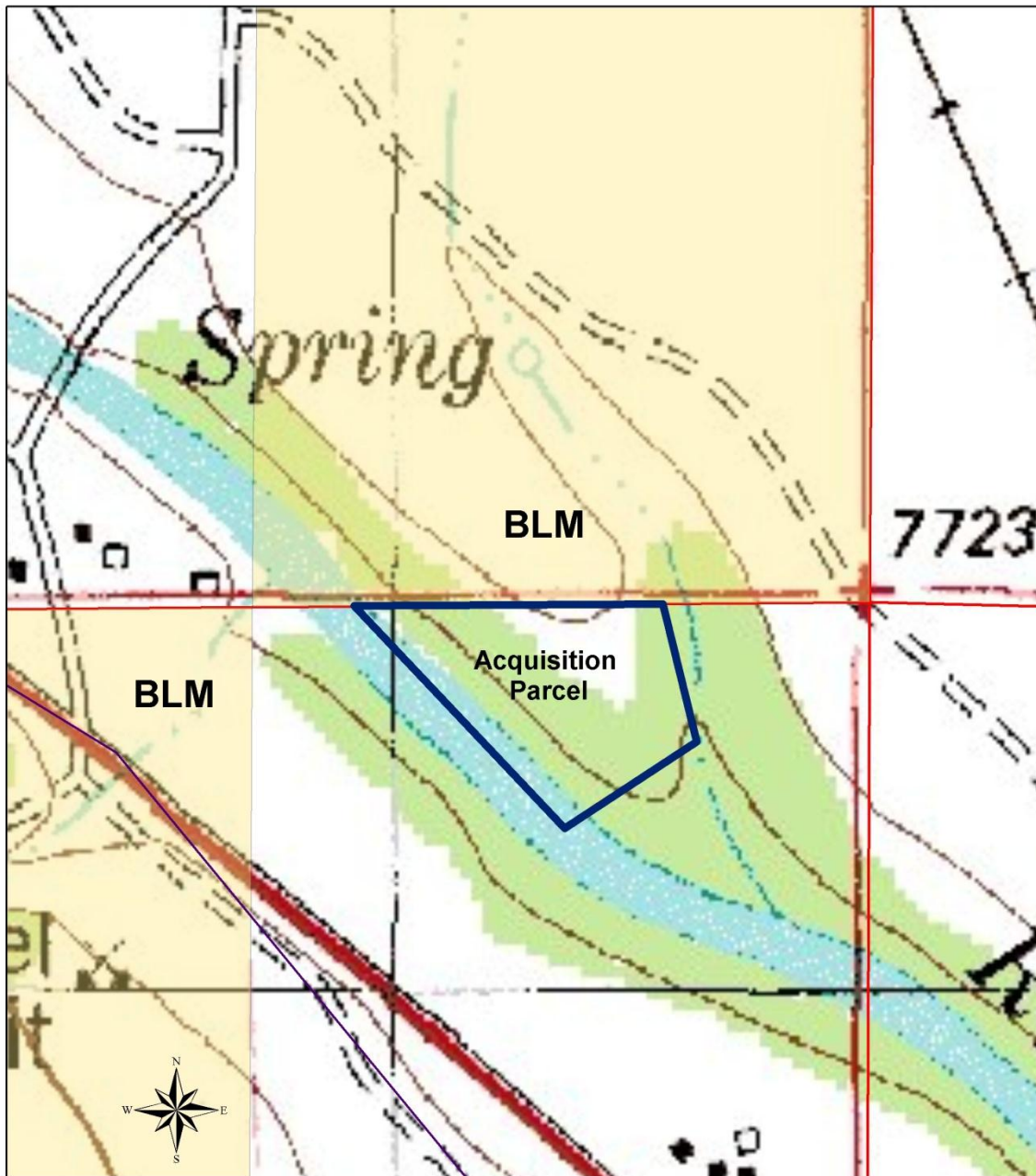
6thPM, T15S R78W Sec. 10

0 1,250 5,000 7,500 10,000 Feet

NOTE TO MAP USERS

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Fishermans Bridge Land Acquisition

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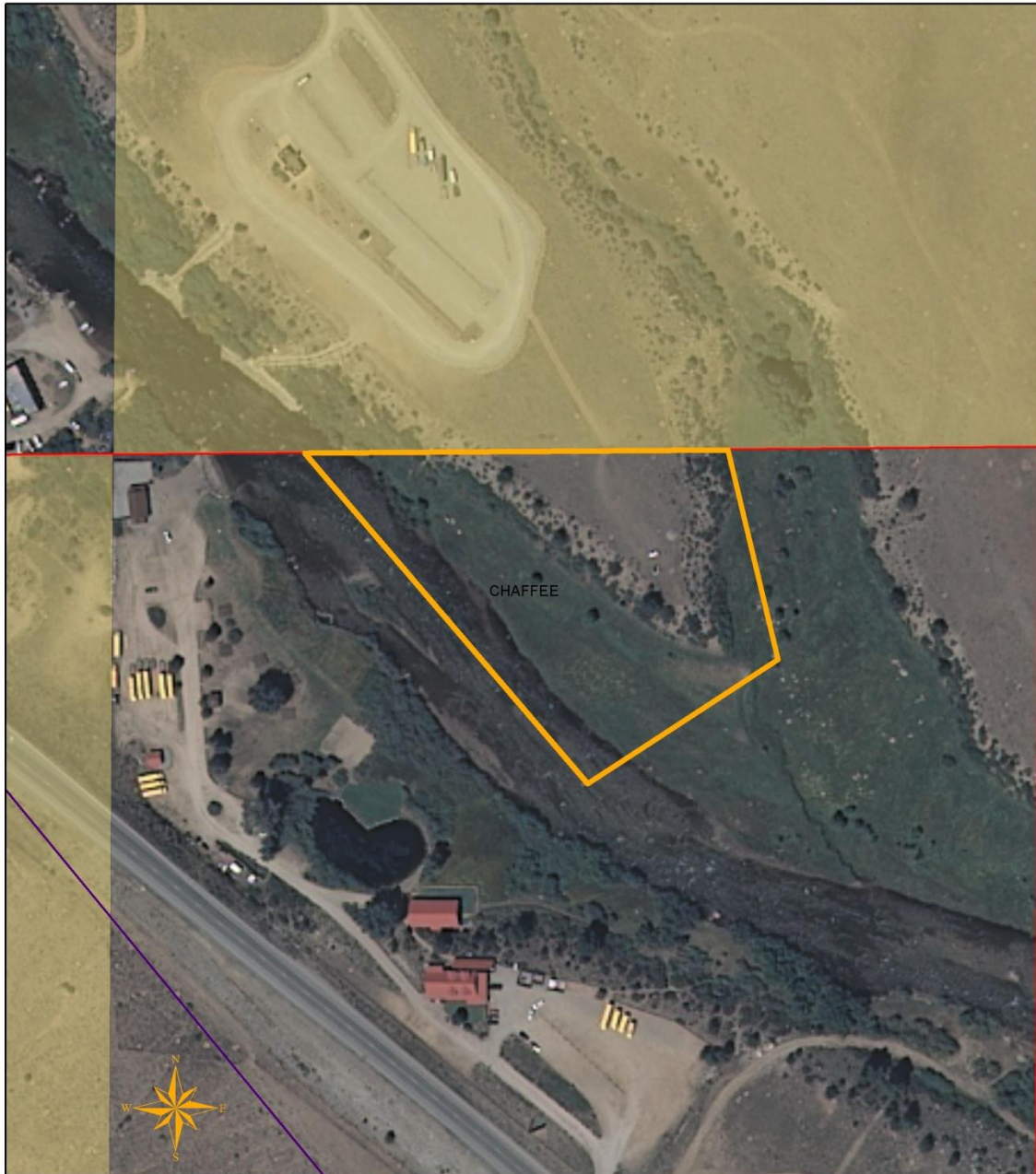
6thPM, T15S R78W Sec. 10

0 90 180 360 540 720 Feet

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Fishermans Bridge Land Acquisition

DOI-BLM-CO-200-2011-0081 EA

6thPM, T15S R78W Sec. 10

0 55 110 220 330 440 Feet

NOTE TO MAP USERS
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created by Martin Weimer 10/30/11

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is to acquire 3.97 acres of private property located along the Arkansas River in Chaffee County, CO. The parcel is adjacent and immediately downstream of the Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site. This recreation site is leased to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) under the Recreation and Public Purpose Lease Act (R&PP). Any additional development of this parcel would need to be evaluated through a separate Environmental Assessment. The parcel to be acquired is accessed through the existing Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site. BLM issued a Right of Way (ROW) to the previous private property owner to access their parcel. This ROW will be canceled when the parcel is acquired.

The reasoning for the purchase of this parcel of land is to relieve the congestion at the existing Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site and to make the existing site more functional. This acquisition would allow the current site to be expanded to relieve congestion and to allow for rafts, especially large heavy float-fishing rafts, to take out at this site. Currently, these heavy float-fishing rafts cannot be dragged up the existing boat slides due to the steepness of the boat slides. In addition, float-fishing rafts usually have only one guide and one client making it even more difficult to negotiate the boat slides.

The parcel to be acquired has no buildings or structures on it, but does have electricity and a domestic well. The well permit is restricted to domestic use associated with one household, so AHRA would not be able to use the current permit to supply water to the Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site. The well permit should be specifically referenced in the acquisition documents, and a change of owner/address should be filed for the well permit. The AHRA (Colorado Parks and Wildlife) may consider using the well in the future to provide water to the recreating public. The BLM should apply for a water right (or other water action) on the well, if it is decided to use the well for recreational use. If it is decided that BLM does not want to use the well it should either be capped or plugged and abandoned.

NO ACTION: The 3.97 acre parcel of land would not be acquired under this alternative. Alternative means of relieving the congestion and the bottlenecking at the current rafting put-in would have to be sought by CPW and BLM.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: No other alternatives were considered.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: May, 1996

Decision Number: 1-59 Land Ownership Adjustment, 1-86 Recreation

Decision Language: 1-59 Identified parcels for acquisition or retention will provide values for public use and have access. 1-86 provide for acquisition or easements to enhance water-based recreation.

Name of Plan: Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan

Date Approved: January, 2001

Decision: Pg. 2-2 (B) Area Wide Multiple Use Goals #10

Decision Language: Pg. 2-2 (B) Area Wide Multiple Use Goals Acquire parcels which are needed to accomplish objectives through exchanges or direct acquisition.

Standards for Public Land Health: In January 1997, Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS / MITIGATION MEASURES:

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: Air quality in the area is generally good to excellent. Frequent winds scrub the air shed of fugitive dust generated from activities conducted by people in the area. Neither the proposed action nor the no-action alternative will result in air quality standards that are degraded from the current situation.

GEOLOGIC AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The subject property is located in the Arkansas River Valley, with the valley floor being covered by Pleistocene age and younger alluvial deposits. The two deposits that have been mapped in this area by the Colorado Geological Survey consist of coarse materials, ranging from sandy silt to well-rounded boulders.

Mineral potential of this property consist of aggregate and placer gold. Operations focused on these commodities are peppered throughout the Valley between Salida and Buena Vista.

A more detailed geologic and mineral resource description of the subject parcel can be found in the mineral potential memorandum that was prepared by the Department of Interior, Office of

Minerals Evaluation on December 8, 2011. This memorandum concluded that there is minimal value to the mineral estate and that a full mineral potential report is not required.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the subject land is acquired, mineral disposals for aggregate type material would not be permitted, due to the objective of using the land to expand recreational use. The acquired minerals would not be open to the Mining Law, which would govern gold operations, unless an opening order process is pursued.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The proposed acquisition parcel lies along the east bank of the Arkansas River. The parcel can be broken down into two pieces. A dry upland bench above the river that is comprised of the Dominson gravelly sandy loam with 1-9% slopes and steeper slopes that lead down to the river bottom comprised of the Dominson gravelly sandy loam with 9-45% slopes. The shallower slope areas are fairly well suited for the recreation area uses that are currently nearby, the steeper areas are somewhat to severely limited due to the slopes. These steeper areas require more intensive construction techniques to be employed to install sustainable improvements.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The actual acquisition of the parcel would have no direct impact to soil resources. Future improvements on the site associated with the construction of river access would most likely have impacts on soils in the future. At this time, these impacts can't be quantified until specific plans have been made. Any future actions would need to be analyzed in a separate NEPA document.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the parcel is not acquired, there would be no new impacts to soil resources. The possibility of development is possible and some degree of soil impact could occur.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Upland Soils: Soils on the parcel have not been analyzed for Public Land Health Standards; however it is expected that with no development and very limited usage the soils are currently meeting standards.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The proposed acquisition parcel lies along the east bank of the upper Arkansas River near Nathrop, CO. Water quality in the Arkansas River in this area is not meeting state water quality standards due to Zinc and Cadmium. This impairment is related to past mining activities many miles upstream in the Leadville area. Also on the parcel, there is a small perennial stream that originates a short distance upstream. The water quality of this stream is expected to be good judging from what is known of ground water and other springs in the area.

There is a domestic well on the property that little is known about.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The actual act of acquiring the parcel would have no effect on water quality since it would be solely a paper transaction. Future improvements on the site associated with the construction of river access could have impacts on water quality. At this time, these impacts can't be quantified until specific plans have been made. Any future actions would need to be analyzed in a separate NEPA document.

Future use of the well would be dependent on water quality testing and obtaining adequate water rights for the use of the water.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the parcel is not acquired, there would be no new impacts to water resources. The possibility of development is possible and some degree of soil impact could occur.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Water Quality: Water quality on the Arkansas River in this location is not meeting Public Land Health Standards due to impairment upstream related to historic mining. The site itself is not contributing to this finding and the acquisition would not alter this finding in anyway.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

INVASIVE PLANTS*

Affected Environment: Invasive plants in the area include but are not limited to: dalmatian toadflax, Canada thistle, hoary cress, and various knapweeds

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

*Invasive plants are plants that are not part of (if exotic), or are a minor component of (if native), the original plant community or communities that have the potential to become a dominant or co-dominant species on the site if their future establishment and growth are not actively controlled by management interventions, or are classified as exotic or noxious plants under state or federal law. Species that become dominant for only one to several years (e.g., short-term response to drought or wildfire) are not invasive plants.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Std. 4)

Affected Environment: The acquisition parcel lies along the Arkansas River corridor. The bald eagle, a BLM sensitive species, is known to frequent the Arkansas River, primarily during the winter months. Bald eagles feed on waterfowl and fish that would be found along the river system. Bald eagles have been documented between Salida and Buena Vista using large cottonwood riparian areas that are relatively free of human impacts. During the winter months, when eagle use is peaking, human use of the river at this location is minimal.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The act of acquiring the parcel will have no impact on threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Further development at the site, once proposed, would require additional analysis to determine effects.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the parcel is not acquired there would be no new impacts to threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species:
The project would not impact or change public land health standards for Threatened and Endangered Species.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The climate of the analysis area averages 11 to 16 inches of precipitation annually, while July and August produce the highest amount of rainfall. May and June produce the least amount of rainfall. The mean annual temperature for the area is 40 degrees F. with a frost free period of 60 to 100 days. The optimal growing season for native plants is May 1 through August 15 (NRCS, 1995). Elevation of the analysis area is 7,700 feet.

The proposed acquisition parcel (approximately 4 acres) is mostly made up of upland vegetation along with riparian along the banks of the Arkansas River. The upland vegetation consists of a grass-shrub component made up of Indian rice grass, sand dropseed, blue grama, needle-and-thread, fringed sage, snakeweed, wax current, and mountain mahogany. There are scattered pockets of pinon pine trees.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The parcel acquisition would have no direct impact to vegetation. It is likely, however, that future improvements on this parcel would have some type of negative impacts to vegetation. These impacts would be analyzed with further NEPA.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Not acquiring this parcel would have no direct impact to vegetation. Under private ownership it is likely that future development would occur.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities:
Vegetation on the proposed parcel has not been analyzed for Public Land Health Standard 3. The acquisition of the parcel would not have a negative impact to the standard.

WETLANDS & RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: This small parcel is adjacent and directly south of the busy Fisherman's Bridge Recreation site. The Fisherman's Bridge Recreation site parcel is isolated, approximately 40 acres in size with 440 feet of Arkansas River riparian. Approximately one half of that is a developed boat launch and is directly across from developed private land also used for boating access. A separate tributary to the Arkansas River bisects the upper 40 acre Fisherman's Bridge parcel, but that drainage is east of the proposed acquisition. Downriver has less developed shoreline riparian primarily used for grazing or rural housing development adjacent to the river.

The 3.97 acre parcel proposed for acquisition is unfenced and generally grazed in conjunction with the east bank of the river downstream from the parcel. The acquisition parcel has approximately 700 feet of additional Arkansas River riparian, but has not been assessed relative to riparian condition.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Acquiring this parcel allows a 700 foot segment of one bank of river to come into public ownership. High values for shoreline recreation use can be anticipated; however riparian habitat value will be small due high anticipated levels of human disturbance and its short length. Vegetation response if relaxed from grazing will change with succession if the parcel gets fenced separately, but potential recreation development could alter a portion of the shoreline area. Due to size, substantial gain in resource value is small, however within this river segment public land shoreline is valued and would be additive to that directly upstream.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None for this action.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Not acquiring this parcel would keep the land private likely to be grazed, then potentially developed into future housing.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Riparian Systems: Acquiring this parcel does not alter the condition of any existing public land riparian resource.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: This small parcel is adjacent and directly south of the busy Fisherman's Bridge Recreation site. That parcel is isolated, approximately 40 acres in size with 440 feet of Arkansas River riparian. Some angling occurs here, but shoreline length and competing recreation limits angling. The fishery present is a well know brown trout fishery, however most angling on the river occurs in more favorable locations. Approximately one half of the existing BLM shoreline is a developed boat launch and is directly across from developed private land also used for boating access. A separate tributary to the Arkansas River bisects the upper 40 acre Fisherman's Bridge parcel, but that drainage is east of this proposed acquisition and no additional aquatic habitat is gained in that drainage. Downriver has less developed shoreline riparian primarily used for grazing or rural housing development adjacent to the river. This proposed 3.97 acre parcel is unfenced and generally grazed when the east bank of the river below is. The acquisition parcel has approximately 700 feet of additional Arkansas River riparian, but has not been assessed relative to riparian condition.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Acquiring this parcel allows a 700 foot segment of one bank of river to come into public ownership. High values for shoreline recreation use can be anticipated; however aquatic shoreline and riparian habitat value will be small due to high anticipated levels of human disturbance and its short length. Vegetation response if relaxed from grazing will change with succession if the parcel gets fenced separately, but potential recreation development could alter a portion of the shoreline area. Due to size, substantial gain in resource value is small, however within this river segment public land shoreline is valued and would be additive to that directly upstream.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None for this action

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Not acquiring this parcel would keep the land private likely to be grazed, then potentially developed into future housing.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities:

This small public land area of aquatic habitat is influenced by larger regional factors rather than local site conditions. Acquisition of the parcel does not substantially modify aquatic habitat.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The acquisition parcel lies along the Arkansas River corridor. The parcel is too small to consider impacts to mega fauna species such as mule deer and elk; however, there are a number of small mammal species that may continuously occupy the site. These mammal species utilize a variety of habitats, including riparian areas, floodplains, and uplands for food, water, and shelter. Many of these species are active nocturnally or during crepuscular hours. Most species use all three zones to some extent. Small to medium-sized mammals that inhabit, or potentially inhabit the parcel to be acquired, include mice, voles, Mexican woodrat, raccoon and skunk

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The act of acquiring the parcel will have no impact on terrestrial wildlife species. Further development at the site, once proposed, would require additional analysis to determine effects.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the parcel is not acquired by BLM there will be no new impacts to terrestrial wildlife species. However, future development of the site is unknown under private or other ownership so impacts are not known.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities:
The acquisition would not impact or change public land health standards for terrestrial wildlife species.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The foothills riparian forest is distributed along stream systems in the foothills, lower mountains and mountain parks from 5,500-10,000 feet in elevation. The riparian forest is dominated by a deciduous component, especially narrow-leaf cottonwood, a variety of willow species, box elder, mountain alder and river birch. The understory of these systems is typically rich, with a wide variety of shrubs and herbaceous plants. Riparian areas represent a transition zone between the aquatic ecosystem and the drier uplands. The riparian zones are well defined, unique, and highly productive areas which are sensitive to disturbance. In riparian systems 75% of the bird species use riparian areas during some part of their life cycle. In deciduous foothills riparian systems, yellow warbler is the species most frequently detected, followed by American robin, northern flicker, house wren, warbling vireo, song sparrow, western wood-pewee, and broad-tailed hummingbird. In coniferous systems, the cordilleran flycatcher is the most frequently detected species, followed by broad-tailed hummingbird, ruby-crowned kinglet, American robin, golden-crowned kinglet, Swainson's thrush, mountain chickadee, yellow-rumped warbler, and western tanager.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The act of acquiring the parcel will have no impact on migratory birds. Further development at the site, once proposed, will require additional analysis to determine effects.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the parcel is not acquired there will be no new impacts to migratory birds.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Both prehistoric and historic sites are present in the vicinity of the acquisition. BLM does not routinely conduct cultural resources inventories on acquired land. If an undertaking that might affect the newly-acquired lands is proposed, BLM will conduct additional Section 106 compliance. Because the undertaking involves no ground disturbance, no impacts to historic properties will occur.

TRIBAL AND NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

Affected Environment: Aboriginal sites are known to be present in vicinity of the area of potential effect (APE). Because the undertaking involves no ground disturbance, no impacts to aboriginal sites will occur. However, new inventories will be conducted before initiation of any undertakings that might affect any sites that might hold special significance for Native Americans (e.g., traditional cultural properties).

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Because no additional cultural resources inventory was required, no new sites were identified. However, previous inventories in the vicinity of the APE did not result in the location of any potentially sacred or traditional sites.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The geology in this area is not likely to contain recognizable paleontological resources and therefore this project will not have an adverse impact.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The adjacent Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site is significantly developed for boating access and managed under a Class II visual rating. The parcel of land to be acquired maintains similar characteristics to the adjacent recreation site.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The acquisition of this parcel of land will have no direct or indirect impacts to the adjacent recreation site visual values.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: The area should be managed with a Class II visual rating once acquired.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The proposed action affects areas that are rural in nature. The lands adjacent to these parcels are comprised of open rangeland and recreational areas. As a result, there is no minority or low-income populations in or near the parcel to be acquired. As such, the proposal will not have a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: The historic use of this property appears to mostly be grazing. A Phase I Environmental Assessment of the subject property was conducted at this site on August 17, 2011 by Environmental Alternatives, Inc. This assessment resulted in the following findings related to environmental conditions:

- The site is underdeveloped with exception of a water well and associated electric meter. The well is steel cased with a static water level of 26 feet below the ground surface. The well use is limited to one single family dwelling by Division of Water Resources.
- Portions of the subject property are in a FEMA floodplain.
- Numerous metal drums and containers are present. Those checked were empty. The condition of the ground under the barrels is unknown since it was not observable.
- Topographical conditions do exist, which would result in migration of hazardous materials and spills onto the subject property from the north.

In conclusion, the assessment revealed no environmental conditions in connection with the property except for the following:

- Potential environmental condition in the soil under the pile of railroad ties.
- Potential environmental condition in the soil under the metal barrels.

On September 26, 2011, BLM conducted a soil and water sampling effort at the subject parcel to address the data gaps identified during the Phase I, as well as determine the quality of the seeps located down gradient of the drum storage area. This data is considered screening level data only. The following is a summary of this sampling event:

Sample ID No.	Sample Location	Sample Depth (inches below ground surface)	Sample Type	Sample Description	Sample Analysis Suite (See Appendix A and B for entire laboratory report)	Headspace
FB Soil-1	Railroad Ties	4 - 6	Composite Soil	Sandy gravel with silt and cobbles; no odor	VOCs (8260) SVOCs (8270)	0.0
FB Soil-2	Drums	4 - 6	Composite Soil	Sandy gravel with silt and cobbles; strong sweet odor	VOCs (8260) SVOCs (8270)	0.0
FB Seep	Hillside Seep	N/A	Groundwater	Clear; no odor; slight sheen	VOCs (8260) SVOCs (8270)	N/A

The results indicated trace amounts of methylene chloride, a volatile compound, in the seep sample. The soil samples exhibited trace concentrations of semi-volatile compounds that include pyrene, benzo (b) fluoranthene, chrysene and fluoranthene. The chemicals detected in the soil and seep samples at these trace levels do not represent an environmental hazards, per the applicable regulations.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: If the solid waste is removed from the subject property prior to acquisition and as based on the Phase I Site Assessment and preliminary sample screening, there will most likely not be a solid or hazardous waste concern that will need to be addressed by BLM.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: Mitigation will be specific to waste removal only and not include any action related to the soils or groundwater. Removal of all the identified solid waste currently located on the surface of the subject surface of the parcel needs to be completed and documented prior to completion of an acquisition. This removal action needs to be in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations and result in final disposition at an offsite licensed landfill facility.

In addition, the well on the property needs to be properly secured to not allow general access prior to completion of the acquisition. This will assure compliance with State regulations, as well as eliminate a direct pathway for possible contamination of the aquifer.

A final walk through of the site conditions will be conducted by BLM prior to completion of the acquisition. At that time, all required site mitigation will be assessed to ensure it was completed adequately. A cover page for the Phase 1 will be prepared by BLM to document this final walk through.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

LAND RESOURCES

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The parcel of land has had some occasional fishing occurring by the private property owners. The private property owners have not allowed the general public to use this land.

Environmental Effects: There are no environmental effects from the current recreation use on this private land.

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: There would be a direct positive impact through the purchase of this parcel in reducing the congestion at the existing Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site and to make the existing site more functional. This acquisition would allow the current site to be expanded to relieve congestion and to allow for rafts, especially large heavy float-fishing rafts, to take out at this site. Currently, these heavy float-fishing rafts cannot be dragged up the existing boat slides due to the steepness of the boat slides. In addition, float-fishing rafts usually have only one guide and one client making it even more difficult to negotiate the boat slides.

Indirect positive impacts from the purchase of this parcel would be the elimination of any future conflicts that may arise if a private residence is built on this parcel. Some of those conflicts could involve excessive noise, dust and trespass. New public river access is a factor that leads to this indirect economic benefit for the Upper Arkansas River Valley.

The AHRA is one of the leading economic contributors to the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The commercial boating industry and the angling community provide a large part of these economic benefits. The ease of access to the river; coupled with the amount of access available to the public within the 150 mile recreation area, is a large factor in the economic benefits to the region. Any time additional public river access can be provided it is believed to only help maintain this economic situation.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

FARMLANDS, PRIME AND UNIQUE

Affected Environment: The proposed parcel occurs in an area known for irrigated farmlands, but is not considered as prime and unique.

RANGE MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed parcel is adjacent to an active grazing allotment identified as the Fisherman's Bridge Allotment #05906. The allotment is permitted to McCurry Land & Livestock. The parcel identified for acquisition is unfenced from the BLM allotment and cattle have historically drifted onto this private parcel. It is not known if the permittee has a private lease with the parcel owners.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Acquiring this parcel as proposed will not have any negative impacts to grazing management on the Fisherman's Bridge Allotment. Due to the small size, this acquisition provides no benefits to grazing management. Since this parcel is unfenced from

the existing allotment, a new fence would be required if development occurs and livestock use is not desired.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None.

No Action Alternative

Direct and Indirect Impacts: None

Mitigation/Residual Effects: None

LANDS AND REALTY

Affected Environment: The proposed parcel is adjacent to an active recreation site used by the AHRA. There are electrical lines crossing the property and the electric line and any other existing easements will need to be serialized and added to LR-2000 and the BLM data base. The existing water well, if not capped, should be reported to the appropriate tracking data base for the BLM (probably well and water rights and the State Office). The current property owner has a right of way to his property serial number COC-25762. This ROW crosses the Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site. In the event the acquisition is successful the property owner will need to withdraw his right of way, and if he has met all reclamation requirements, if any, the right of way will be closed. The lands will remain closed unless there is action by realty to open them.

Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Acquiring this parcel as proposed will have impacts to realty by adding additional easements across federally owned lands, and will increase the acreage of lands administered by BLM. It may also increase the foot print of use on BLM lands due to the existing heavy use of the area. The acquisition will cause the loss of one rent collecting right of way, but will achieve serialized easements. The parcel is likely to be used in a recreation capacity considering the connected lands use, and the parcel is too small, heavily used, and isolated for other multiple use purposes. Fencing and signing is needed on the perimeter of the property to help mitigate encroachment and trespass by the public on to private lands adjoining this parcel.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: Additional fencing may be needed until the area is developed to help the over flow from the recreation area. Signs should be posted to describe allowable use or for exclusion of the area to prevent unauthorized use of the area. Fencing and signing of the perimeter where it adjoins private lands will also be necessary to prevent visitors to the recreation area from wondering onto or using private lands without permission of the land holder. Recording of easements and amenities to the proper data bases within the BLM is necessary as directed above. The closing of the right of way COC-25762 at the same time the acquisition would take place or within 60 days.

No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Without the acquisition of this parcel the public may start to encroach on to the private lands, considering the heavy use of the area. This could lead to action by the land holder both against the BLM.

Mitigation/Residual Effects: Additional fencing may be needed and signing and monitoring might be necessary to control possible public overflowing from the AHRA recreation site on to the private parcel.

WILDERNESS, AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: The above resource values are not present on this parcel of private land.

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: The above resource values are not present on this parcel of private land.

OTHER ELEMENTS:

The resources or issues below were dismissed due to their not being present or applicable. If one of these elements are present and need to be brought forth for analysis, follow the instructions after the table

Resource/Issue	Rationale for dismissal
Cadastral Survey	LDR and COS certificates signed 4/11/12
Fire	This action will not result in significant impacts to the fire management program.
Forest Management	No effect to on-going or future forest management actions
Law Enforcement	There is no law enforcement issues associated with this action.
Noise	This action will not result in any impacts due to noise or result in any increased noise levels.
Socio-Economics	This action will not result in significant impacts to the socio economics of the region.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

The private property to be acquired adjacent to the Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site has remained undeveloped with the exception of a water well head and an electricity box. If acquired by BLM the site may be developed in the future. The parcel would be open to recreational activities typically allowed by BLM. If the site is developed there would be a day use fee associated with using the site.

Soils: The Fisherman's Bridge area receives heavy recreational pressure and the west side of the river has numerous private residences and private river access points. Overall, this section of river is rural in character. The addition of this parcel into public ownership would add little new impact to soil resources when looked at from a landscape-level perspective.

Water Quality, Surface and Ground: The Fisherman's Bridge area receives heavy recreational pressure and the west side of the river has numerous private residences and private river access points. Overall, this section of river is rural in character. The addition of this parcel into public ownership would add little new impact to water resources when looked at from a landscape-level perspective.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species: As described above, this location has a high volume of river use during the rafting season. If acquired and developed this parcel may experience an increase in recreational and boating activity during the rafting season. However, because bald eagle use is primarily in the winter, little to no impact will be incurred.

Vegetation: The surrounding area receives heavy recreational use. The acquisition of this parcel results in very little cumulative impacts to vegetation.

Wetlands and Riparian Zones: The act of acquiring this parcel by itself does not impact the quality or function of the larger scale river.

Wildlife, Terrestrial: As described in the proposed action, this location has a high volume of river use during the rafting season. If acquired and developed, the Fisherman's Bridge area may experience an increase in recreational and boating activity during the rafting season. If development of a river access occurs, it will likely result in the destruction of a much of the small mammal habitat.

Migratory Birds: As described in the proposed action, this location has a high volume of river use during the rafting season. If acquired and developed, the Fisherman's Bridge area may experience an increase in recreational and boating activity during the rafting season. This will cause a greater disruption to birds that inhabit the area, but not resulting in "take" as defined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Range Management: The area is increasingly experiencing more recreation and development thereby depleting open space and suitable agricultural lands. The cumulative impacts of this proposal are minor due to the small size of the parcel.

Lands and Realty: The area is increasingly experiencing more recreation and development thereby narrowing the opportunities for multiple uses and directing the use more towards recreation as the primary function of the parcel. This continued development has a possible

impact of depleting open space. The cumulative impacts of this individual proposal are minor due to the small size of the parcel, but it will add a small acreage of open space for the time being and prevent further development by a private owner. The continued popularity of recreation and development along the river as a whole does have cumulative impacts. These impacts include human waste, garbage, carbon monoxide from visiting vehicles, soils and vegetation loss, loss of wildlife due to human occupation, human wildlife encounters, traffic issues and others that could be discovered through further analysis. There are positive community impacts created by visitors bringing recreation dollars to the local economies which helps encourage the expansion of recreation and tourism.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Rob White – Colorado Parks and Wildlife

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW		
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality
Tony Mule'	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey
John Nahomenuk	Recreation, River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers, LWCs
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American
Vera Matthews	Realty Specialist	Realty
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement

FONSI

DOI-BLM-CO-200-2011-0081 EA

Based on review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human

environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects from any alternative assessed or evaluated meet the definition of significance in context or intensity, as defined by 43 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described below:

RATIONALE:

Context: The 3.97 acre parcel that is to be acquired with Land and Water Conservation Fund monies is located approximately 6 miles south of Buena Vista, CO and 20 miles north of Salida, CO near the town of Nathrop, CO. The parcel is located just off of Hwy. 285 adjacent to the existing Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site. The existing Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site is near capacity on many summer weekends. There may be an opportunity to expand the recreation site onto the newly acquired land. The recreation industries that are dependent on the Arkansas River are very important to the economies of our local governments. The river also serves a larger regional market that is important to the states economies. The river is also recognized nationally as a model for river management.

Intensity:

Impacts that may be beneficial and adverse: Beneficial impacts include resolving a crowding issue at the Fisherman's Bridge Recreation Site that is adjacent to the parcel to be acquired. The acquisition would allow for a new boat ramp to be constructed thus spreading out the use at the existing boat ramps. Other beneficial impacts include eliminating potential conflicts with the adjacent private property if a private residence is built on the parcel. Some of those conflicts could involve excessive noise, dust and trespass. Additional benefits include: maintaining open space, increasing boating and angler access and reducing conflicts between competing commercial boating companies. Many factors associated with the AHRA lead to indirect economic benefits to the Upper Arkansas River Valley. Increased public river access is one of the factors that lead to these indirect economic benefits. There were no negative impacts identified for this action.

Public health and safety: Public safety may be enhanced by eliminating crowding at the existing recreation facility adjacent to the parcel to be acquired. Minor hazmat concerns will be addressed through clean-up with a final inspection prior to the acquisition.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area: This EA evaluated the area of the proposed action and determined that no unique geographic characteristics such as: wild and scenic rivers, prime or unique farmlands, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics; were present.

Degree to which effects are likely to be highly controversial: The acquisition of the parcel is not considered controversial and is supported by both private and commercial boaters. There is no disagreement or controversy among ID team members or reviewers over the nature of the effects on the resource values on public land by the proposed action.

Degree to which effects are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:
There are no unique or unknown risks associated with this acquisition.

Consideration of whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts: The acquisition of lands adjacent to BLM in order enhance resource values, in this case to enhance recreational opportunities and provide a safer environment at the recreation site, are not considered to be precedent setting in a way that would allow significant impacts for other such future actions.

Consideration of whether the action is related to other actions with cumulatively significant impacts: The acquisition of river front property within the Arkansas River Special Recreation Management Area would not produce any additional cumulative impacts.

Scientific, cultural or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: Both prehistoric and historic sites are present in the vicinity of the acquisition. BLM does not routinely conduct cultural resources inventories on acquired land. BLM would conduct additional Section 106 compliance, if an undertaking that might affect the newly-acquired lands is proposed.

Threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat: The act of acquiring the parcel of land will have no impact on threatened or endangered species. Further development at the site, once proposed, will require additional analysis to determine effects.

Any effects that threaten a violation of Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment: The proposed action conforms with the provisions of NEPA (U.S.C. 4321-4346) and FLPMA (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) and is compliant with the Clean Water Act and The Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Endangered Species Act.

NAME OF PREPARER: John Nahomenuk

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Melissa K.S. Garcia

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Vincent Hooper

DATE: June 19, 2012

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

/s/ Keith E. Berger
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 7/11/12

APPENDICES:

ATTACHMENTS: Mineral Reports

DECISION RECORD

DOI-BLM-CO-200-2011-0081 EA

DECISION: It is my decision to implement the proposed action to purchase the parcel of land as described above.

RATIONALE: The proposed action will not result in any significant negative effects and will add to the manageability of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: Removal of all the identified waste currently on the subject parcel needs to be removed prior to completion of an acquisition. This removal action needs to be in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations and result in final disposition at an offsite licensed landfill facility. A final walk through of the site conditions will be conducted by BLM prior to completion of the acquisition. At that time, all required site mitigation will be assessed to ensure it was completed adequately. A cover page for the Phase 1 will be prepared by BLM to document this final walk through.

In addition, the well on the property needs to be properly secured to not allow general access prior to completion of the acquisition. This will assure compliance with State regulations, as well as eliminate a direct pathway for possible contamination of the aquifer.

Lands and Realty: Mitigation/Residual Effects: Further NEPA analysis would be needed prior to any development on to the acquired parcel. Additional fencing may be needed until development of the parcel occurs to help control use from the developed recreation site. Signs should be posted to describe allowable uses. Fencing and signing of the parcel to be acquired to prevent trespass onto adjacent private lands. Recording of easements and amenities to the proper data bases would need to occur. The right of way COC-25762, would need to be closed at the time the acquisition takes place or within 60 days.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING (optional): Compliance of rules and regulations will be jointly handled by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and BLM

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

/s/ Keith E. Berger
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 7/11/12